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EARLY DEVELOPMENT

c. 1400–400 B.C. Books of the Hebrew Old Testament written

c. 250–200 B.C. The Septuagint, a popular Greek translation of the Old Testament, produced

A.D. 45–85? Books of the Greek New Testament written

90 and 118 Councils of Jamnia give final affirmation to the Old Testament canon (39 books)

140–150 Marcion’s heretical “New Testament” incites orthodox Christians to establish a NT canon

303–306 Diocletian’s persecution includes confiscating and destroying New Testament Scriptures

c. 305–310 Lucian of Antioch’s Greek New Testament text; becomes a foundation for later Bibles

367 Athanasius’s Festal Letter lists complete New Testament canon (27 books) for the first time

397 Council of Carthage establishes orthodox New Testament canon (27 books)

c. 400 Jerome translates the Bible into Latin; this “Vulgate” becomes standard of medieval church

ENGLISH VERSIONS FROM LATIN

c. 650 Caedmon, a monk, puts Bible books into verse

c. 735 >Historian Bede translates the Gospels

871–899 King Alfred the Great translates the Psalms and 10 Commandments

950 The 7th-century Lindisfarne Gospels receive English translation

955–1020 Aelfric translates various Bible books

c. 1300 Invention of eyeglasses aids copying

c. 1325 Both Richard Rolle and William Shoreham translate psalms into metrical verse

1380–1382 John Wycliffe and associates make first translation of the whole Bible into English

1388 John Purvey revises Wycliffe Bible

1455 Gutenberg's Latin Bible—first from press

ENGLISH VERSIONS FROM GREEK

1516 Erasmus's Greek New Testament, forerunner to the Textus Receptus used by KJV translators

1525 William Tyndale makes the first translation of the New Testament from Greek into English

1536 Tyndale strangled and burned

1537 Miles Coverdale's Bible completes Tyndale's work on the Old Testament

1538 Great Bible, assembled by John Rogers, the first English Bible authorized for public use

1560 Geneva Bible—the work of William Whittingham, a Protestant English exile in Geneva

1568 Bishop's Bible—a revision of the Great Bible

1582 Rheims New Testament published

1607–1611 King James Version, the "Authorized Version," is made

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[Christian History originally published this article in Christian History Issue #43 in 1994]

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Carsten Peter Thiede

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